

Many interesting developments occurred in Washington State during 2004 and the first seven months of 2005.

FTA Included Community Transit and Sound Transit in New Environmental Management Program

January 2004

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the ten U.S. public transportation agencies selected to participate in training and assistance for implementing Environmental Management Systems (EMS). The winners, including Community Transit in Snohomish County and Sound Transit, were chosen from over 100 transit systems with the nation's highest levels of ridership. EMS is an organized set of operational procedures to assure compliance with federal, state and local environmental regulations, as well as to facilitate environmental stewardship. These procedures address such issues as energy conservation, efficient water use, materials recycling and waste minimization, vehicle emission reduction, and improved fueling operations and hazardous materials management.



President Bush Issued Executive Order on Coordination **February 2004**

President George W. Bush issued an Executive Order establishing the Interagency Transportation Coordinating Council on Access and Mobility as part of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT). The purpose of this newly established team is to enhance the availability of transportation services to individuals with special transportation needs by eliminating duplication and overlapping federal programs, and by improving the coordination of federally supported transportation services at all levels. The Council consists of the U.S. secretaries of transportation, health and human services, education, labor, veterans affairs, agriculture, housing and urban development, and the interior; the Attorney General; and Commissioner of Social Security. The Secretary of Transportation, or his designee, serves as the chairperson.

FTA Honored Washington with **"United We Ride" Leadership Award**

February 2004

The Federal Transit Administration selected Washington's Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) for the "United We Ride" Leadership Award, recognizing the significant steps the state has taken to improve transportation options for its 1.5 million citizens with special needs, including individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low income families. Governor Gary Locke accepted the award in Washington D.C. during a national leadership forum on coordination of human service transportation. Washington was one of only five states to receive recognition and to be invited to make a presentation about the state's program at the forum.



KC Metro General Manager Retired

March 2004

Rick Walsh retired in March 2004 after serving as the KC Metro Transit General Manager since 1996. Walsh's public transportation career in Seattle began in 1972 when he joined Seattle Metro as a transit operator after graduating from the University of Washington. In 1989 Walsh was named deputy transit director, taking on the management of 3,500 employees, 1,200 transit vehicles and an annual budget of more than \$200 million. During his tenure as General Manager, the system saw a 15 percent expansion in bus service, a 27 percent increase in the number of operating vanpools, and paratransit growth of 100 percent over the last three years.



Sounder Introduced New Northern Commuter Rail Service to Everett

April 2004

Sound Transit began operating Sounder commuter rail service from the city of Everett to Seattle, with a stop in the city of Edmonds. The new service began with a single train to Seattle in the morning and a return trip in the afternoon. As track improvements are completed, three more roundtrips will be added. The service north of Seattle added about 30 miles to the Sounder system already operating between Tacoma and Seattle. All together, Sounder service stretches about 82 miles through the central Puget Sound region.



Everett Transit Hired New Director

April 2004

Paul Kaftanski was named Director of Transportation and Everett Transit service for the city of Everett. During his 19-year transit career, Kaftanski has been involved in several major transportation milestones in Everett and the Puget Sound region. In 2003, he was serving as north corridor program manager for Sound Transit when commuter rail was initiated between the city of Seattle and Everett. He had also served as the executive administrator for the city of Everett and in that role, Kaftanski provided oversight of construction, service development, environmental mitigation and permitting of the Everett Station, a \$46 million, multi-modal transportation station and higher education center in downtown Everett.

FTA Honored Pierce Transit for Web Site

May 2004

The U. S. DOT's Volpe National Transportation Systems Center reviewed and ranked 1,368 active web sites from across the nation for FTA and the Joint Program Office for Intelligent Transportation Systems. Pierce Transit was honored with the Transit Website Award. Evaluation criteria included the posting of information, such as route and system maps, schedules, trip planner services, fares and other useful information and links, as well as the organization of information and the ease with which a web site user could locate and gain access to the information. Public transportation agencies in Boston, Denver and San Diego also received recognition.

Puget Sound Leadership Forum Held on Coordinated Special Needs Transportation

June 2004

The Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) Chair, Paula Hammond, co-hosted the Puget Sound Leadership Forum on Special Needs Transportation at the Washington State Convention Center. The goal of the forum was for leaders and managers in the region to understand what it will take to make the necessary but difficult changes to provide more trips, more efficiently for special needs customers. Jennifer Dorn, the Federal Transit Administrator, opened the general session. Attendees included policy makers, and agency leaders from throughout Puget Sound and speakers from across the country.

Greyhound Cut Service in the Northwest

August 2004

Greyhound Bus Lines terminated service to 20 Washington communities. This service change is part of Greyhound's ongoing effort to rationalize its service network and eliminate unprofitable and marginally profitable routes across the country.

Staff from WSDOT's Public Transportation Office met with two local coordinated transportation coalitions in Walla Walla and Yakima counties to discuss short-term options for providing service in affected communities. As a result, beginning in September 2005, a new "GrapeLine" bus service, funded through WSDOT's public transportation grant program, will provide service between Walla Walla and Pasco, connecting passengers to Greyhound, Amtrak, Ben Franklin and Valley Transit. In Yakima, People for People, a non-profit transportation provider, expanded its service to bring people from small communities into the City of Yakima to catch the Greyhound bus.



Everett Transit Voters Approved Sales Tax Increase

September 2004

Voters in Everett supported a tax increase to double the transit share of the local sales tax, from 0.3 percent to 0.6 percent. The increase is Everett Transit's first since 1978 when voters approved the original 0.3 percent sales tax.

The transit system had warned before the election that it would have to cut service by nine percent from its current level if voters rejected the tax referendum. Everett Transit had already cut service by 14 percent in 2003.



King County Metro Maintenance Team Took First Place at International Roadeo

October 2004

The maintenance team from King County Metro Transit took its second consecutive first prize in the maintenance category of the American Public Transportation Association's International Bus Roadeo, held in Atlanta Georgia. More than 115 teams representing North America's best bus operators and maintenance teams participated in the competition. The maintenance roadeo simulates actual working conditions of vehicle maintenance personnel. Three member teams must troubleshoot planted defects, compete in timed inspections, and take a written test.

Sound Transit Took Ownership of Tacoma-Lakewood Rail Line

November 2004

Sound Transit signed closing documents to purchase a key section of the Lakeview Subdivision for \$13.4 million, taking a step toward extending its Sounder commuter rail service to Lakewood. This is the second of three purchase and sales agreements between Sound Transit and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF) regarding the right-of-way from Tacoma south to Thurston County.

A 2003 agreement provides for the sale of the Lakeview Subdivision in three sections. Under the first agreement, Sound Transit acquired key BNSF properties including potential station sites. The second agreement gives Sound Transit ownership of the 6.5 miles from the Tacoma Dome Station to Lakewood. Sound Transit plans to sign the third agreement, extending Sound Transit's ownership of the right-of-way to Nisqually and the Thurston County line, in the fall of 2005.

Local Transit Initiatives Go Before Voters

November 2004

Voters approved a 0.2 percent sales and use tax for Asotin County's Public Transportation Benefit Area, making "Asotin County Transit" Washington's 27th official public transit system.

Proposition 1 in Vancouver which would have doubled C-TRAN's current sales tax rate of 0.3 percent to maintain current levels of transit service and provide for some service enhancements failed by a vote of 54 percent against the measure. As a result of the defeat of the Proposition, the C-TRAN Board of Directors approved a plan to reduce C-TRAN bus services in Vancouver by 46 percent in September 2005. C-TRAN plans to implement the following measures:

- Solicit public input and adopt a new fare increase.
- Realign the organization from its existing five department into three.
- Freeze all management salary increases.
- Develop and adopt a new service and taxing boundary for C-TRAN.
- Go back to voters with a new proposition in 2005.

In Seattle, voters defeated Initiative 83, which would have stopped development of the 14-mile Seattle Monorail Project.

Clallam Transit Manager DiGuilio Retired

December 2004

Dan DiGuilio, General Manager of Clallam Transit since 1995, retired following a 30-year career in public transportation. He began his career as a law and justice and transportation planner for Grays Harbor Regional Planning Commission in 1979, and became the first director of Pacific Transit. In recognition of his support of rural transit in Washington State, Washington State Department of Transportation, Washington State Transit Insurance Pool and the Washington State Transit Association all presented honors to DiGuilio.

Community Transit Opened Lake Stevens Transit Center

January 2005

Community Transit opened its first transit center in eastern Snohomish County, in Lake Stevens. Commuter service to downtown Seattle with four round trips each weekday and local service connecting Lake Stevens with Everett, Granite Falls Maryville and Quil Ceda Village operate from the center. The \$4.5 million project is an important part of Community Transit's effort to expand services in the Lake Stevens and east Snohomish County area. The 3.84 acre Lake Stevens Transit Center includes 208 parking spaces, four bus bays, two pedestrian loading platforms, custom architectural pedestrian shelters, lighting and security cameras.



Weed Selected GM at Clallam Transit

January 2005

The Clallam Transit System in Port Angeles announced the appointment of 24-year employee Terry Weed as its new general manager. Weed has worked for Clallam Transit since its creation in 1980 and has served as operations manager for the past two decades.



Passenger-Only Ferry Opened in Kitsap County

February 2005

Kitsap Transit in Bremerton introduced 40-minute service on a passenger-only ferry connecting Kingston in the northern part of the Kitsap Peninsula to Seattle. Kitsap Transit entered into a public-private partnership with Aqua Express, to provide the ferry service. The transit system provides bus service to the Kingston ferry landing as part of the agreement with Aqua Express. The ferry offers inside seating for 250 people but the capacity grows to 322 with the addition of outside seating in good weather.



Columbia County Formed State's 28th Transit System

February 2005

The Columbia County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to establish a county transit authority making Columbia County Public Transportation (CCPT) Washington State's 28th official public transit system. CCPT has been providing service in Columbia County for approximately eight years by relying on Medicaid contracts and WSDOT's public transportation grants. By becoming an official transit system, CCPT became eligible to participate in the state's vanpool program, and with voter approval, can levy a local sales tax to obtain stable funding. During the 2003-2005 biennium, WSDOT awarded CCPT \$380,000 in rural mobility grants to purchase a minibus and provide operating assistance for demand response and general public transportation.



ACCT Awarded Grants for Transporting Homeless Students

April 2005

Senator Patty Murray secured federal grant funds for projects to demonstrate innovative ways to provide transportation to homeless students. ACCT staff worked closely with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to identify seven Washington school systems and educational service districts to receive \$845,468 in grants. The federal McKinney-Vento law requires school districts to arrange for transportation to and from school for homeless students. While the law supports school stability for youngsters in the midst of transition, it also creates multiple challenges for districts providing pupil transportation. With these grant funds, Washington has the opportunity to try new ways to efficiently meet student needs.

Sound Transit Launched Residential Van Service

April 2005

In response to a parking shortage at Sound Transit's Sumner Station, Sound Transit with its partner Pierce transit, launched "VanShare", a pilot program providing transportation to and from the commuter rail station. Sound Transit used business partnership funds to contract with Pierce Transit to provide and operate the 12-passenger vans. VanShare provides a connection between a commuter's residence or other pickup point and station. The transportation is free until the end of the pilot project in December 2005, when a fare system will be instituted.

WSDOT Created New Office of Transit Mobility

June 2005

The passage of SHB 2124 during the 2005 legislative session called for the creation of the Office of Transit Mobility, located within the Public Transportation and Rail Division. The legislation places the department in a guiding role coordinating public transportation services, increasing connectivity between those services, and increasing integration of public transportation and the highway system. The Department received \$1.2 million of new funding for the creation of the office and for data collection and analysis for the 2005-2007 biennium. An advisory committee comprised of transit agencies, cities, counties, and regional transportation organization will be established to advise the Governor and WSDOT in program development including development of a Regional Mobility Grant Program.

Transportation Commission Certified Transit Asset Management Plans

June 2005

On June 14, the Washington State Transportation Commission unanimously passed a resolution certifying Asset Management Plan for 27 transit systems. Based on 2003 legislation, as a condition of receiving state funding, each public transit system must develop a plan for managing its assets and have the plan certified by the Transportation Commission. WSDOT staff reviewed the 27 plans, worked with each agency to resolve any issues and presented the plans to the Transportation Commission. Every two years, at the beginning of each state funding cycle, transit systems must self-certify their ongoing compliance.

Meyer Appointed New CEO at Spokane Transit

June 2005

E. Susan Meyer, a businesswoman in the Spokane area, began her new appointment as the chief executive officer of Spokane Transit Authority. Meyer has 20 years of experience in management positions in local businesses and non-profit organizations. Most recently, she operated her own firm, Meyer Consulting, providing business planning, human resources and communication consulting services. Meyer will focus on improved accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness. She plans to continue building a firm foundation of trust and responsibility and move from fundamentals to innovations.

Meyer succeeds Kim Zentz, who left the system earlier in the year to serve as interim executive director of the Spokane Intercollegiate Research and Technology Institute.

Yakima Transit Expanded Transit Center Services and Vanpool Program

July 2005

Bus riders in Yakima now have the convenience of purchasing tickets and bus passes and getting personalized travel information at the transit center. People with disabilities staff the customer service office at the center, through a unique project funded in part with a WSDOT ParaTransit/Special Needs grant. The vanpool program was also expanded with the receipt of ten new vans funded with a grant from the Vanpool Investment Program. The vans provide low-cost, reliable transportation, enabling riders who live in Yakima to travel to their jobs outside the city.



